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# Security Council

Fifty-third Year

*Provisional*

**3879**th Meeting

Thursday, 14 May 1998, 11.40 a.m.

New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Mahugu | (Kenya) |
| *Members*: | Bahrain | Mr. Al-Dosari |
| | Brazil | Mr. Valle |
| | China | Mr. Shen Guofang |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Sáenz-Biolley |
| | France | Mr. Dejammet |
| | Gabon | Mr. Dangue Réwaka |
| | Gambia | Mr. Touray |
| | Japan | Mr. Konishi |
| | Portugal | Mr. Monteiro |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Lavrov |
| | Slovenia | Mr. Türk |
| | Sweden | Mr. Dahlgren |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir John Weston |
| | United States of America | Mr. Richardson |

## Agenda

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the sitution in Tajikistan (S/1998/374)

98-85322 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1998/374)**

**The President:** I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Tajikistan, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President:** The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan, document S/1998/374.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1998/390, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1998/367, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 May 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker on my list is the representative of Tajikistan, to whom I give the floor.

**Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to express our gratitude to you for guiding the work of the Security Council during the month of May and to wish you success in carrying out this extremely important and significant task.

Today's meeting of the Security Council, which is devoted to the consideration of the question of the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for an additional six-month period in accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General, is extremely important for the intensification of the peace process in the Republic of Tajikistan.

It is a great honour for me to express, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, our profound gratitude to the Security Council and the Secretary-General for their unflagging attention to the problems related to an inter-Tajik settlement and for their solidarity with the Tajik people in such a difficult period of post-conflict reconstruction.

The conclusions of the Secretary-General regarding the need for comprehensive international support for the peace process and for the provision of financial assistance to Tajikistan to achieve the goals of reform and development inspire the hope that the United Nations and its specialized agencies will continue to make their important contribution to the stabilization of the situation in the country and will energetically and consistently promote the rehabilitation of the economy and the social sphere in Tajikistan. We are counting on positive results from the meeting of the Consultative Group of donor States, to be convened next week in Paris by the World Bank, which will play a significant role in strengthening the peace process and the stable economic development of Tajikistan.

The assistance of the international community to the efforts of the Government of Tajikistan aimed at a further stabilization of the situation and the continued progress of the country towards peace and national accord is particularly important at this time, when embers of mistrust still glow in the ashes of the civil conflict — embers that ignited flames of tension in March and April of this year, resulting once again in the loss of human life.

The Government of Tajikistan has expressed its profound concern at these local conflicts, which were initiated by individual field commanders of the United Tajik Opposition. We fully agree with the assessment of

these events given earlier by the Security Council and by the Secretary-General.

It is no secret that the recent incidents and armed clashes were initiated by people whose natural environment is lawlessness and chaos. They clearly represent the death throes of those few forces that have not yet freed themselves from the illusion that they can undermine the implementation of the Moscow agreements and drag the long-suffering people of Tajikistan into a new spiral of a fratricidal war. The President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, is firm in his position that there is no reasonable alternative to the peace agreement, that progress towards national accord is irreversible, and that the Government of the country is unswerving in its dedication to the cause of moving the peace process forward.

We value highly the contribution that is being made to the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan by the States and international organizations that form the Contact Group of guarantors. We note the stabilizing role of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Tajikistan.

The Government of Tajikistan expresses its sincere gratitude to the donor States and to all the agencies and non-governmental organizations that supplement the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations as well as its rehabilitation and development activities. This assistance is extremely important and urgent now, as unprecedented heavy rains and destructive landslides have killed dozens of people, left hundreds homeless and done enormous material damage to the national economy and to the social infrastructure. The immediate losses from the natural disaster are assessed at $24 million.

It has been nearly a year since the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan was signed in Moscow, putting an end to the bloody civil conflict and opening the way to building a new and peaceful life. Much has changed over that period of time.

Despite the fact that the implementation of key agreements on military issues has been unjustifiably delayed, thus holding back the progress of the entire peace process, that process is moving forward, albeit slowly, at a steady pace. In this respect a significant role is being played by the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, with which my Government is maintaining the closest contacts.

We value highly the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Tajikistan, Mr. Gerd Dietrich Merrem, who is soon to retire. His personal efforts made a significant contribution to the breakthrough in the inter-Tajik settlement and to the signing on 27 June 1997 in Moscow of the General Agreement.

The Government of Tajikistan is ready to continue constructively to cooperate with the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, whose personnel is rendering effective assistance and support in the implementation of the peace agreements.

Tajikistan is firmly convinced that there is no reasonable alternative to national accord. Based on the positive forces in its society and with the assistance of the international community, the Guarantor States and all of the friends of Tajikistan, the Government will do all that is necessary to ensure that an atmosphere of confidence, peace and stability reigns throughout the country.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Tajikistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

**Mr. Lavrov** (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The draft resolution that the Security Council is to adopt today reaffirms its vigorous and comprehensive support for the people of Tajikistan on their difficult path to peace and national reconciliation. We note with satisfaction that the peace process in Tajikistan has moved forward after the signing in Moscow on 27 June 1997 of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan.

At the same time, despite the agreed timetable, there are significant delays in the implementation of key elements of the inter-Tajik agreement, particularly as regards problems of reintegration, disarmament and the disbanding of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition. The delays in the implementation of the

Protocol on military issues have led to an unjustified shift in emphasis and a break in the sequence of steps in the implementation of the General Agreement, with major emphasis being placed on political aspects to the detriment of the resolution of military issues.

Such an imbalance contradicts the logic of the complex peace process and has become the major reason for the dangerous complications in the situation in a number of regions in Tajikistan. We draw the attention of the parties to the provisions in the draft resolution before the Security Council today that reflect the need for a balanced approach to the implementation of the General Agreement.

The outbreak of tensions in Dushanbe and Kofarnikhon in March and April this year, which led to numerous casualties, demonstrated how fragile peace still is in the country. Russia fully shares the well-known assessments of these events made by the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the Contact Group of Guarantor States.

Russian leaders and the Secretary-General discussed in detail the problems of a settlement in Tajikistan during the Secretary-General's recent visit to Moscow. The unanimous view was expressed that there is no reasonable alternative to the Moscow agreements: only the unconditional and timely implementation of all the commitments undertaken can lead to a solid national agreement in that country. The draft resolution also calls for this.

We note that the views expressed by the members of the Security Council and the Secretary-General are identical regarding the need for comprehensive international support for the peace process in Tajikistan. In this respect, an important role is being played by the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and by the Contact Group. We also believe that the Joint Consultative Group meeting of donors being organized by the World Bank in Paris on 20 May must demonstrate the international community's solidarity with the Tajik people during this very difficult period and should promote the stabilization and economic rebirth of Tajikistan.

We express our highest appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Tajikistan, Mr. Gerd Dietrich Merrem, who, unfortunately, will soon be retiring. We hope that the Secretary-General's new Special Representative for Tajikistan will be a worthy successor to Mr. Merrem.

We support the Secretary-General's intention to conclude the deployment of UNMOT and to reduce its personnel to the level authorized by the Security Council. We are confident that the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition will carry out their commitments to ensure the security of United Nations personnel. We are satisfied with the excellent cooperation between UNMOT and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). We reaffirm the readiness of the CIS peacekeepers to continue to provide assistance in resolving issues with regard to the security of the United Nations military observers, and to resolve with the leadership of UNMOT specific issues for taking measures in this respect. We believe that the potential of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces could be more effectively used to assist in the implementation of the General Agreement in accordance with their mandate.

Russia, together with the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the member States of the Contact Group, will in the future continue to do all that is necessary to prevent the implementation of the Moscow agreements from being thwarted and to promote the stabilization of the situation and the steady progress of the peace process in Tajikistan.

**Mr. Shen Guofang** (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The delegation of China will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us. China supports the peace process in Tajikistan, advocates an active role for the United Nations in promoting peace and reconciliation in Tajikistan and is in favour of further extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). As a close neighbour of Tajikistan, China has always been very concerned about the situation there. We appreciate the commitment of both sides in Tajikistan to the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord. We hope that both sides will be able to maintain the spirit of reconciliation and will endeavour to take measures to enhance mutual confidence with a view to the early completion of the tasks under the General Agreement.

China welcomes the new timetable formulated by the Commission on National Reconciliation. We hope that the effective implementation of the timetable will help reinforce mutual trust and cooperation between the two sides.

China's assessment of the regional peacekeeping efforts of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Tajikistan is positive. We believe that the international community, including the United Nations, should support these efforts. At the same time, we call on the international community to respond positively to the Secretary-General's recommendations on increasing financial assistance to Tajikistan and supporting its economic rehabilitation. We believe that only rehabilitation and development will ensure durable peace and stability in Tajikistan.

In conclusion, I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Gerd Merrem for his contribution to promoting the peace process in Tajikistan during his term as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Tajikistan. At this crucial juncture for peace in Tajikistan, we look forward to the early appointment by the Secretary-General of a new Special Representative to ensure the continuation of efforts to bring about definitive peace and reconciliation in Tajikistan.

**Mr. Touray** (Gambia): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on the situation in Tajikistan. My delegation pays tribute to Mr. Merrem and to Brigadier-General Boleslaw Izydorczyk for the excellent work they did in that country. We also wish to congratulate Brigadier-General Tengku Ariffin Bin Tengku Mohammed on his new job.

My delegation is seriously concerned about the lack of substantial progress in the peace situation in Tajikistan, which is mainly due to the mistrust that exists between the two parties.

We strongly condemn the resumption of hostilities between the parties as evidenced by the recent clashes. While we welcome the new ceasefire arrangements and the exchange of prisoners, we believe that the parties should exercise restraint and do everything to ensure that the peace process is not jeopardized. The resumption of hostilities in March, April and May clearly shows that the peace situation in Tajikistan is not irreversible.

We are encouraged by the fact that both sides are interested in continuing the peace process. It is therefore imperative that the parties translate their interest into commitments and work together to find a lasting solution to this disquieting conflict.In this context, the parties should work together towards building mutual confidence, as distrust only undermines the already rocky status quo.

My delegation is very concerned about the lack of effective control by both sides over their forces. This state of affairs further deepens the fragility of the peace situation. Thus, the speedy demobilization and reorganization of the forces is a key step in the peace process.

We welcome the continued registration of United Tajik Opposition combatants. We are, however, disturbed by the huge discrepancy between the number of fighters registered and the number of weapons recovered. This clearly shows that a large number of registered fighters are still keeping their weapons. The recovery of these weapons is very important for the peace process.

The reluctance of the fighters to take advantage of the amnesty law — a consequence of the delays in the peace process — is not a desirable situation. We hope that the Commission on National Reconciliation will review its processes with a view to enhancing its working methods.

Some major concerns of my delegation are the delays in making the necessary constitutional and electoral reforms. We hope that the parties will give these key issues the priority they deserve. In that vein, we welcome the new timetable adopted by the Commission on National Reconciliation and hope that the parties will be committed to it.

We recognize that quite a lot of post-conflict activities are required to turn the situation in Tajikistan around. In this context, we welcome the demobilization projects adopted by the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and United Nations agencies. We wish to underscore that vocational training and start-up packages are essential for the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life. While we wish to thank the international non-governmental organizations and the United Nations agencies for their interventions in these projects, we hope that the international community will respond to the resource-mobilization efforts of the World Bank not only to support humanitarian activities, but also to set the road for economic recovery and rebuilding of infrastructure.

My delegation agrees with the assessment of the situation in Tajikistan, as amply described in the Secretary-General's report. We believe that things are far from bright, but at least there is more light at the end of the tunnel. The continued presence of UNMOT in Tajikistan for a little while longer is necessary for the

peace process. With this recognition, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the mandate of UNMOT for a period of six months, until 15 November 1998, and thus we will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

**Mr. Konishi** (Japan): At the outset, my delegation wishes, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to express its appreciation to all the men and women working for the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for their efforts to promote the peace process in Tajikistan.

It is, however, regrettable that, despite the efforts made by UNMOT, the progress of the peace process has been very slow during the last three months and that the security situation on the ground remains precarious. My delegation is particularly concerned that the recent violations of the ceasefire have deteriorated mutual confidence between the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). My delegation calls upon both parties to maintain their commitment to the peace process and to redouble their efforts to fully implement the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, particularly the Protocol on military issues.

In such circumstances, it is clear that the presence of the United Nations observers is still indispensable to making the ceasefire truly effective and to facilitating the implementation of the General Agreement. My delegation will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution before us, which extends the mandate of UNMOT for another six months.

My delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General, contained in his latest report, that comprehensive international support, including financial assistance, is essential for the continuation of the peace process and for the reform and development of Tajik society. On the basis of this recognition, Japan has been making a substantial contribution to Tajikistan in the field of refugee and humanitarian aid. It also dispatched recently a political affairs officer to UNMOT.

I should like to close by expressing the readiness of the Government of Japan to continue to participate actively in the efforts of the Security Council and the international community as a whole to assist in the achievement of lasting peace in Tajikistan.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Kenya.

My delegation joins the consensus in extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for another six months, until 15 November 1998. In so doing, we reconfirm our commitment to the peaceful settlement of the military and political crisis that Tajikistan still faces. After years of conflict and suffering, the parties to the crisis in Tajikistan signed the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, as well as the Protocol on military issues. We believe that this Agreement and the Protocol constitute a viable framework within which the people of Tajikistan can work to establish lasting peace, security and prosperity for all.

After so many years of strife, it is also obvious that a vigorous and sustained process of national reconciliation must be put in place and nourished. The Commission on National Reconciliation in Tajikistan has begun working on a critical healing process, which we think will, in the long term, bring the people of Tajikistan together and ensure a common national focus and a common attainment of national objectives. We therefore welcome the elements in this draft resolution that call upon the parties to undertake vigorous efforts to implement the General Agreement, the Protocol on military issues and, as a matter of priority, the timetable of measures adopted by the Commission on National Reconciliation on 29 April 1998. May I also take this opportunity to commend the delegation of the Russian Federation for its excellent work in coordinating the negotiations on this draft resolution.

As my delegation has consistently stated, there is a clear linkage between peace, security and development. We are therefore encouraged that quick action is to be taken, during a consultative group meeting to be held by the World Bank on 20 May 1998, to address some of the post-conflict economic issues that face Tajikistan. We also encourage Member States and others with means to respond promptly to the consolidated appeal for Tajikistan launched last March.

Although we are still quite concerned about the precarious security situation and continued violations of the ceasefire in some parts of Tajikistan, we welcome the efforts being made by the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition to address not only the day-to-day security problems, but also the long-term goal of

sustaining a viable peace process. In this connection, we warmly welcome the support that UNMOT continues to provide to this process, together with those of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Russian border forces, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Contact Group of countries which are involved in this process.

In conclusion, we warmly associate ourselves with the words of high commendation for Mr. Gerd Merrem, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, who will be retiring soon. We also congratulate all the personnel of UNMOT for their good work and Brigadier-General Izydorczyk, who has recently returned to his national service, for his efforts aimed at assisting the parties in the implementation of the General Agreement and the Protocol on military issues.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1998/390.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Bahrain, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, Gambia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President**: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1167 (1998).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

**Mr. Richardson** (United States of America): The United States was pleased last June when the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) signed the Agreement to end their conflict, demobilize and share power while preparing for elections. We are growing concerned, however, that the peace process has lost its momentum. On the one hand, we see cooperation between the parties in the Commission on National Reconciliation, members of the UTO employed in responsible positions in the Government and a significant number of UTO soldiers registered and quartered in assembly areas. On the other hand, we are seeing Tajikistan go through round after round of violence and disruption. On this basis, we find it difficult to see the completion of even the first phase of the peace process.

The United States voted today in favour of extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), as a sign of continued faith in the peace process. We believe that people of good will are working to see it through to a successful conclusion. We must make it clear, however, that our willingness to support a broken process is not infinite. We and the international community want to give the parties the time they need to establish an enduring peace, but the parties must recognize that they alone hold the responsibility for moving the process forward. It is clearly within the capacity of both to comply with their obligations under the peace accords. The Government committed itself to sharing power in the interim period until elections, and it must do so. The Government must implement its obligation to appoint members of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to 30 per cent of Government positions. The Government must also act rapidly to implement the provisions of the amnesty law. These actions must be undertaken without being conditioned on actions by the United Tajik Opposition.

For their part, the UTO leaders committed themselves to demobilizing and disarming their forces. Nonetheless, in the past few months we have witnessed several instances of renewed combat that began when UTO forces attacked Government positions. Regardless of their disagreement with Government activities, UTO commanders cannot resort to violence in response. The UTO leaders must take responsibility for the actions of all UTO field commanders and order them to abide by the military protocol, including assembling, registering and disarming. If necessary, the UTO leaders should work with the Government to subdue and disarm insubordinate commanders. The peace process cannot survive outbreaks of violence such as those that we saw in March and April.

The parties agreed to a timetable in their peace process that, while ambitious, is still achievable. They must expeditiously implement the first phase of the military protocol. With the experience they already have in quartering and registering UTO units, they should be able to move quickly towards that goal. They should also be thinking ahead about how to move on towards legalizing political parties and preparing for elections.

In the meantime, the parties have a responsibility for ensuring the security of UNMOT, foreign diplomatic missions and international personnel. They should cooperate in this effort, specifically in making the joint protection unit into a showcase of national cooperation.

As a sign of the interest of the United States in the success of Tajikistan's peace process, we have pledged significant quantities of assistance, and we have abided by our pledges. We call on all Member States to step forward with donations to guarantee the process and relieve the continuing humanitarian crisis and the threat from landmines.

We congratulate the personnel of UNMOT for the excellent work they have done in seeing the country through the recent crises. We add to that a note of special thanks to the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Gerd Merrem, for the years he devoted to bringing peace to Tajikistan and for his success in bringing the parties together to sign the peace accord. We wish him well in retirement, and we call upon the Secretary-General to secure the advances made by Mr. Merrem by appointing a replacement as quickly as possible.

**The President:** There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*